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1. From 1946 to 1950 the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) retained the appearance of a popular democracy, governed by elected committees. These committees were composed of individuals who, without distinction of class or party, were considered supporters of the revolution and enemies of imperialism and colonialism. A constitution was drafted by the National Assembly in 1946; however, it has never been put into effect.
2. Since 1951 the actual governing power has resided in the Central Committee of the Lao Dong Party.<sup>1</sup> The following policy statement has appeared in the Party newspaper: "Our party holds the power in order that a proletarian dictatorship may be installed in the near future." The National Assembly, at present composed of 90 percent old-time or recently converted Communists, is the official directing organ of the DRV Government.
3. During the current period of transition, the DRV regime is governed by a series of committees on all echelons:
  - a. The National Assembly, which elects the Government Ministers.
  - b. The Interzone Administrative and Resistance Committees, currently appointed by the Central Government rather than elected.
  - c. On the Provincial level there is a Provincial People's Assembly, whose members are elected by the population. The number of representatives to the Assembly allowed each district is based on population figures. The People's Assembly in turn elects the Administrative and Resistance Committee, composed of from five to nine members. Two of these members are appointed by the Central Government. However, the Central Government has recently made additional appointments to fill all vacancies.

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d. On the District level, there is no People's Assembly. The local Administrative and Resistance Committees are appointed by the Interzone Committee on the recommendation of the Provincial Committee.

e. On the Village level, an elected People's Assembly appoints the Administrative and Resistance Committee members. The committee is composed of five to seven members, two of whom are appointed by the Provincial Committee on the recommendation of the District Committee.

4. The composition of the committees on all levels is characterized by the slogan "Army - People - Government". Representatives of the Central Government, the Army and the population sitting on the committees tends to reduce friction between the three policy-making groups. All problems are resolved during the weekly and monthly criticism and auto-criticism meetings.

5. In spite of wartime conditions, the DRV has made an effort to hold "elections" for the various committee levels. Elections, having a democratic appearance, but conducted by the pro-Communist People's Assemblies would of course ensure the presence of Communist Party representatives on all Committees without having to directly appoint them. Although impossible to hold elections for the National Assembly, it was decided to do so on all other levels, regardless of the cost.

6. All DRV services are subject to control by two bodies: the service on the immediately superior level and the local Administrative and Resistance Committee. A provincial Economic Service, for example, is technically responsible to the Interzone Economic Service, while administratively controlled by the Provincial Administrative and Resistance Committee. Because of growing administrative complications as the result of war conditions, sometimes dividing a locality into three or four sections, the DRV has placed greater emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical control. As a result, the Administrative and Resistance Committees now have greater powers and act as the Central Government representative in all technical and administrative matters.

7. The Central Government Ministries are actually only planning boards for overall policy, while the Interzone Administrative and Resistance Committees act as the real governing bodies in their respective areas. Uniform policy throughout the DRV zones is assured, however, through Lao Dong Party representatives sitting on the Committees who receive policy directives from the local Lao Dong Party Committee. Lao Dong members also hold positions on all military and technical bodies.

Central Government Organization

8. The following is the present composition of the DRV Government:

President	Ho Chi Minh
Vice President	Pham Van Dong
Minister of Defense	Vo Nguyen Giap
Minister of Finance	Le Van Hien
Minister of Commerce and Industry	Phan Anh
Minister of Justice	Vu Dinh Hoe
Minister of Public Health	Hoang Thuc Tri
Minister in Charge of the National Bank	Nguyen Luong Bang
Minister of Labor	Nguyen Van Tao
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Hoang Minh Giam

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9. The Central Government has become extremely mobile. The Ministries and Departments frequently change titles, location and responsibilities according to the exigencies of the situation. The following are two examples of such changes:

- a. The Ministry of Economy, under Phan Anh, is now called the Ministry of Commerce and Economy. Its activities have been restricted to planning the development of commerce and handicraft in DRV villages.
- b. The Credit and Production Department and Treasury were formerly part of the Ministry of Finance. Early in 1951, however, they were merged to form the Department of Money and Credit. Recently they became part of the National Bank. The Treasury's only current function, as a section of the National Bank, is accounting for Government expenditures and receipts. The Ministry of Finance has become a financial planning board responsible for drawing up the annual budget.

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1.  Comment. The Lao Dong Party was formed in January 1951.

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